4.1 AESTHETICS

This section of the EIR analyzes the potential environmental effects on aesthetics from implementation of the proposed project. Data for this section were taken from the Beach and Edinger Corridors Specific Plan (BECSP) Environmental Impact Report and the Huntington Beach General Plan Urban Design Element. Full reference-list entries for all cited materials are provided in Section 4.1.5 (References) and project studies.

4.1.1 Environmental Setting

The project site is located in the urbanized northeastern portion of the City of Huntington Beach in western Orange County, California. The 12.5-acre project site is located on the northeast corner of Edinger Avenue and Gothard Street in the Town Center District of the BECSP. Along Edinger Avenue, the project site is designated as Town Center Core in the BECSP, while the remainder of the site is designated as Town Center Neighborhood. All new development within these corridor centers is subject to the BECSP Development Code, and more specifically development standards included as BECSP Sections 2.1.3 and 2.1.4.

The project site is located approximately 3 miles from the City's Downtown and approximately 4 miles from the Pacific Ocean. As shown in Figure 3-2 (Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses), the project site is bound by commercial development to the north, the Union Pacific Railroad and vacant commercial development to the east, Edinger Avenue and commercial development to the south, and Gothard Street and Goldenwest College to the west. Existing commercial development to the north and east of the project site will be replaced in the near future with mixed-use developments. The approved Amstar/Red Oak Project (formerly known as The Ripcurl Mixed-Use Development) will be constructed on the site to the north, and The Revised Village at Bella Terra (mixed use and Costco) Project will be constructed on the site to the east. Although these adjacent sites are not located within the BECSP area, development would be complimentary to the vision of the Town Center District of the BECSP. Building heights in the immediate vicinity of the project site currently range from one to three stories in height; however, approved projects, not yet constructed, will be up to six stories in height.

Surrounding Area Characteristics

Edinger Avenue Corridor

The Edinger Avenue Corridor extends from Beach Boulevard to Goldenwest Street. Land uses along Edinger Avenue primarily consist of general commercial and retail-oriented uses. Major developments along Edinger Avenue include Golden West College to the west and the Bella Terra Mall to the east of the project site, both located on the north side of Edinger Avenue.

A majority of the commercial and retail uses along Edinger Avenue exhibit the standard strip-mall development pattern of Huntington Beach, in which isolated, low-density, one- to two-story buildings are oriented around surface parking lots. In this configuration, a row of multiple tenants tend to occupy a single building significantly set back from the street/sidewalk and surrounded by surface parking lots.

Visually, this development appears washed out with an abundance of faded colors and out-dated building exteriors. Both the proposed project site and the adjacent site to the east are developed with vacant big-box retail buildings surrounded by expansive surface parking lots. Several modern high-rise buildings with large glass facades are located north of the Bella Terra Mall within the Towers at Bella Terra office development (previously called One Pacific Plaza). The heights of these structures range from five to twelve stories. Commercial signage is prevalent along the street front and hanging from streetlights. Landscaping along Edinger Avenue consists of trees and ornamental shrubs that are located along the edges of the retail/commercial centers and within the median. The exception to the existing commercial/retail pattern in the area is Golden West College, which consists of educational buildings and a large amount of open space, including heavily landscaped surface parking lots visible from the roadway.

As stated in the City's General Plan, uses along Edinger Avenue have little physical or visual connection. As a consequence, the corridor lacks an overall identity and strong physical anchors. However, this condition is beginning to change, particularly with the Bella Terra Mall and the recent approval of The Revised Village at Bella Terra project adjacent to the project site. The project, when implemented, would help enhance the visual character of the corridor by introducing new, attractive, multi-level, mixed-use structures initiating the transformation of the character of the Edinger Avenue Corridor from a commercial strip to a Town Center Boulevard, as anticipated by the BECSP.[2]

The Bella Terra Mall, which opened in September 2006, is the most prominent commercial use along the Edinger Avenue Corridor. The mall consists of an open air, retail, dining, and entertainment complex with large public spaces located amid walkways or alleys. The architectural style of the mall consists of a mix of Classical, Neoclassical, Baroque Rococo, and even Modern and Postmodern styles with an overall theme of Tuscan Village. The heights of the buildings generally range from 33 to 90 feet with tower elements rising to approximately 104 feet. The varying building heights throughout the site provide variety to the roofline. Finally, limestone, tile, and other materials in natural colors are incorporated into the facades of the structures to keep with the Tuscan Village motif, and the landscaping plan includes a large number of mature trees and small parks, accented with colorful plants.

Gothard Street

Development on Gothard Street in the vicinity of the project site consists of several older one-story strip malls oriented around surface parking and freestanding restaurants, visually consistent with those described on Edinger Avenue. The dominant visual feature through this area is street trees and surface parking lots. Along the east side of Gothard Street, north of Edinger Avenue, existing development is oriented away from the road and is set back from the roadway by low walls, landscaping, and parking lots or driveways. The approved Amstar/Red Oak mixed-use project is located adjacent to the project site to the north. The approved project would replace the existing strip mall and Del Taco.

North of the intersection of Gothard Street and Edinger Avenue, on the west side of Gothard Street is the Golden West College Campus. Development on campus is set back from the roadway by a substantial surface parking lot. Extensive landscaping along the perimeter of the parking lot and

[2] City of Huntington Beach, Section 1.4.2 (Edinger Avenue Corridor), Book I (Community Intent), *Beach and Edinger Corridors Specific Plan* (2010), pp. 5–6.

structures on campus, consisting of manicured lawns, trees and shrubbery, as well as pedestrian pathways are highly visible.

Project Site Characteristics

The proposed project is currently developed with a big-box Levitz Furniture building, which has stood vacant since 2008. The Edinger Avenue/Gothard Street corner of the site is developed with an operational EZ Lube Oil Change Shop. The 235,000 square feet (sf), former Levitz Furniture Store, is visually consistent with typical big-box retail structures, and features flat beige windowless walls with a red trim, and a flat roof. The main entrance to the building features a pitched red awning, glass doors, and minimal landscaping on either side of the entrance. A landscaped island with a row of trees and grass is positioned in front of the main entrance. The Levitz Building is setback from Edinger Avenue by an expansive surface parking lot that is dotted with tall light poles and the occasional landscaped island. It is evident that the Levitz building has been closed for some time. As the loading bays located in the front of the building, adjacent to the entrance are closed, debris is commonly stacked in the parking lot, paint is washed out and faded, and there are commonly no cars in the parking lot. Figure 4.1-1 (Views of Existing Development) illustrates the appearance of the project site.

The EZ Lube Oil Change Store is located on the corner of Edinger Avenue and Gothard Street and has been operational since 1996. The approximately three story, 4,990 sf, stucco building features a pitched, tiled roof, blue awnings, and arched windows. The building is setback from the intersection by a grass lawn and several tall Palm Trees. An EZ Lube sign is situated on the corner of Edinger Avenue and Gothard Street. Landscaping, consisting of low shrubs and trees, along the perimeter of the EZ Lube store visually separates the building from the Levitz Building and the associated surface parking lot. Refer to Figure 4.1-1 for a depiction of the EZ Lube Building and its visual relationship to the Levitz Building.

Views to and from the Project Site

Due to the built-out nature of the Edinger Avenue corridor and surrounding area, as well as the overall flat terrain of the area, views available to the public are of a typical urban landscape. No views of recognized scenic resources are available from the proposed project site. Expansive views are not available from this area. Most views consist of the immediately adjacent, low-scale commercial development and the more distant high-rise development located to the northeast, adjacent to the I-405. The scale and prominence of the Bella Terra Mall, and its attractive design features, such as tower elements and varied rooflines, make the mall a dominant visual feature along the Edinger Avenue Corridor. Other dominant visual features in the area include landscaping consisting of trees and shrubs along roadways, surface parking lots, and signage. Transmission lines are also highly visible from adjacent roadways. As such, from the perspective of a pedestrian or motorist, foreground views consist primarily of roadways and transit-related features, such as automobiles, traffic lights, signage, roadway landscaping, and surface parking lots. Other elements visible in the foreground include one and two-story commercial structures, buildings on the Golden West College campus, and surrounding vegetation. Visual elements visible in the mid-ground consist of view corridors along roadways, framed by urban development and landscaping. Mid-ground views from various vantage points may also include signage, transmission lines

and towers, roadway infrastructure and the elevated I-405. Background views consist of high-rise buildings, transmission lines, tall trees and signage, and sky.

Light and Glare

The project site and the surrounding area currently have ambient nighttime light levels typical of an urbanized area. Although the site is currently vacant, a variety of sources produce artificial light in the nearby vicinity, including street lights, illuminated signs, automobile headlights, security lights associated with buildings and parking lots, and interior and exterior lighting from commercial and office buildings.

Glare results from sharply reflected light caused by sunlight or artificial light reflecting from highly finished surfaces such as window glass or brightly colored surfaces. The high-rise office and hotel uses located northeast of the project site, adjacent to the I-405 Freeway and north of the Bella Terra Mall, have the potential to generate glare due to the large facades of glass surfaces. The remaining surrounding commercial/retail development presents only limited potential for glare, such as from light reflected off vehicle windows, and is typical of urban environments.

The types of land uses that are typically sensitive to excess light and glare includes residential, hospitals, senior housing, and other types of uses where excessive light and glare may disrupt sleep. In addition, light and glare may interfere with the vision of drivers. Currently there are no light sensitive uses immediately adjacent to the project site; however, the future Amstar/Red Oak (formerly known as The Ripcurl) and The Revised Village at Bella Terra projects to be located immediately north and east of the project site, respectively, both include residential uses and therefore would introduce light sensitive uses to the area. No light sensitive uses are currently located on the project site.

Shade and Shadow

The two-story Levitz Furniture building and the two-story EZ Lube building currently create limited shade and shadow patterns all of which are contained within the project site. Land uses immediately surrounding the project site are of similar height and create limited shade and shadow patterns. The nearest shadow-sensitive use is Golden West College, located across Gothard Street to the northwest. Future residential uses associated with the Amstar/Red Oak project to the north and The Revised Village at Bella Terra project to the east would be considered shadow-sensitive uses immediately adjacent to the project site. No shadow-sensitive uses are currently located on the project site.

4.1.2 Regulatory Framework

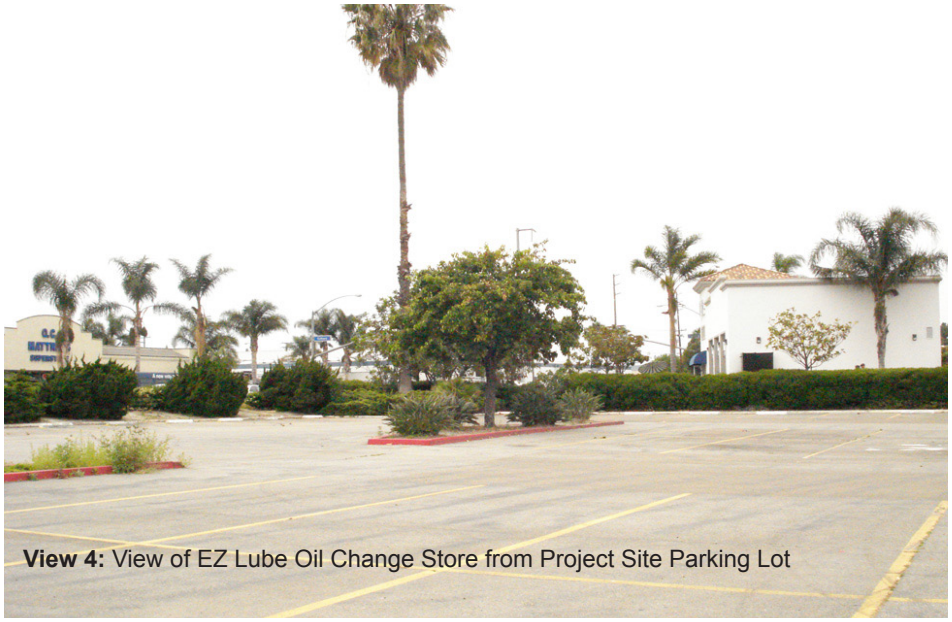
Refer to Section 4.1.2 (Regulatory Framework) of the BECSP Program EIR, for applicable federal, state, and local regulations applicable to the proposed project. No new regulations have been implemented since certification of the Program EIR.

The BECSP Development Code, which includes development standards, development regulations, and guidelines, governs all development actions with the BECSP area, including the proposed project site. The proposed project would be subject to development standards and guidelines specific to the proposed project site's BECSP designations of Town Center Core and Town Center Neighborhood, included as BECSP Section 2.1.3 (Town Center Core) and Section 2.1.4 (Town Center Neighborhood).

View 1: View of Levitz Building Signage from Project Site Parking Lot

View 2: View of Main Entrance to Levitz Building and Gothard Street from Project Site Parking Lot

View 3: View of EZ Lube Oil Change Store on the Northeast Corner of Edinger Avenue and Gothard Street



View 4: View of EZ Lube Oil Change Store from Project Site Parking Lot

***Source*:** PBS&J, 2010.

FIGURE **4.1-1**

Views of Existing Development

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General Plan and BECSP Consistency Analysis

The proposed project would be designed in accordance with the BECSP Development Code, which contains development standards specific to the project site's designations of Town Center-Core and Town Center Neighborhood. Conformance with BECSP development standards, which is mandatory for all development occurring within the BECSP area, would ensure that future development along Edinger Avenue, including the proposed project, would provide high quality design and would be compatible and complimentary with surrounding development. BECSP Section 2.5 includes street regulations that establish the design of specific streetscape improvements based on segments of the BECSP. The proposed project would comply with the BECSP Development Code, including the provisions of Section 2.5 which call for a Classic Boulevard configuration along Edinger Avenue in front of the proposed project site, and therefore would be consistent with General Plan Policy UD 1.3.1 and Policy CE 7.1.4, which call for consistent and established landscape and urban streetscape design themes.

4.1.3 Project Impacts and Mitigation

Analytic Method

A qualitative assessment of visual impacts was prepared by evaluating the existing visual character and setting and comparing it to visual conditions anticipated to occur with the proposed project. It is important to note that an assessment of visual impacts is not a quantitative analysis, but rather qualitative and can be largely subjective. The project site and surrounding uses were observed, and photographs were taken to determine the short- and long-term visual effects of the proposed project. Policies from the City's General Plan and provisions of the BECSP Development Code were identified to determine if the project design was consistent with these adopted plans.

Thresholds of Significance

The following thresholds of significance are based on Appendix G of the 2010 CEQA Guidelines. For purposes of this EIR, implementation of the proposed project may have a significant adverse impact on aesthetics if it would do any of the following:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day- or nighttime views in the area

Effects Not Found to Be Significant

Threshold	Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

The California Department of Transportation designates scenic highway corridors. The project site is not located within a state scenic highway; nor is the project site visible from any (officially designated or eligible) scenic highway. The nearest eligible scenic highway is Pacific Coast Highway, located approximately 4 miles west of the site. However, Pacific Coast Highway is not designated in this area at this time. In addition, as the project site is presently developed, the site does not contain rock outcroppings or historic buildings. ***No impact*** would occur.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold	Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Impact 4.1-1 **Implementation of the proposed project would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista. This impact is considered *less than significant*.**

The proposed project site is not located within the viewshed of a scenic vista. Scenic vistas are considered publicly available views of scenic resources. For the purposes of this analysis, "scenic resources" can include natural open spaces, topographic formations, and landscapes. Many people associate natural landforms and landscapes with scenic resources, such as oak woodlands, lakes, rivers, streams, and some historical areas. However, scenic resources can also include urban open spaces and the built environment, such as parks, trails, pathways, nature centers, archaeological, historical resources, and architectural features. Furthermore, the City's General Plan Urban Design Element identifies visual assets in the City that are considered recognized scenic resources for the purpose of this analysis. No scenic resources are located on the project site or are visible from vantage points on or in the immediate vicinity of the project site.

Based on the visual assets inventoried in the City's General Plan Urban Design Element, views of the Pacific Ocean, the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, landscaping in the Downtown area and Central Park, Huntington Harbour, and City parks are considered scenic vistas in the City. Due to the largely flat terrain and built-out nature of the City of Huntington Beach, scenic vistas in the City of Huntington Beach are primarily located along the coast and adjacent to the identified open space areas, where views of these scenic resources are available. Changes to a scenic vista would be considered substantial if the project results in obstruction of a view of a scenic resource from a public vantage point, or results in the degradation of a scenic vista through the removal, alteration, or demolition of a scenic resource, which constitutes the scenic vista as viewed from public vantage points.

Due to the flat topography and built-out nature of the project site and surrounding area, and the distance of the project site from the coast (4 miles), there are no scenic vistas visible from the project site or from public vantage points in the vicinity of the project site. As such, development of the proposed project would not obstruct views of a scenic resource and would therefore not result in changes to a scenic vista. The project site is currently developed with a vacant Levitz Furniture Store building with associated

surface parking and an EZ Lube Oil Change business in a highly urbanized portion of the City. No scenic resources are located on the project site. As such, development of the proposed project would not result in the removal, alteration, or demolition of a scenic resource that contributes to the quality of a scenic vista. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista. This impact is considered ***less than significant***.

Threshold	Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

Impact 4.1-2 **Implementation of the proposed project would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. This impact is considered *less than significant*.**

For the purpose of this analysis, a substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site would occur if the project introduces a new visible element that would be inconsistent with the overall quality, scale, and character of the surrounding development. This analysis considers the degree of contrast between existing and anticipated features that represent the area's aesthetic image, in addition to the degree to which the project would contribute to or degrade the area's aesthetic value.

The proposed project site is located along the Edinger Avenue Corridor within the BECSP area. One of the BECSP objectives is to ensure that new buildings and landscaping contribute to the emergence of an increasingly visible and memorable visual identity appropriate to the unique history and character of the City. This objective is achieved through the application of the BECSP Development Code, which provides development standards required for all new development within the Specific Plan area, as well as development regulations in the form of municipal policies and design guidelines pertaining specifically to issues of visual character and aesthetics. To ensure that all new development within the BECSP complies with the Development Code, all development, including the proposed project is subject to site plan review. The proposed project must adhere to development standards for both the Town Center Neighborhood and Town Center Core designations.

The proposed project site is currently underutilized and developed with a vacant big-box retail building, a large surface parking lot, and an EZ Lube Oil Change business. There is limited vegetation or other features that create visual interest on the project site.

The project proposes the development of six residential mixed-use blocks, connected by a network of new streets and sidewalks, oriented around a 0.75-acre public open space area. Development on each block would include a five- or six-story structure, consisting of four to five levels of one- and two-bedroom residential units over street level live-work units or retail uses, and structured, subterranean parking. Proposed retail uses would be located at street level fronting Edinger Avenue. Each block would also include private recreational amenities, including a swimming pool and common open space areas within an interior courtyard. On-street parking would be permitted on all new streets, as well as along Gothard Street. Refer to Figure 3-3 (Proposed Project Site Plan) for an illustration of the proposed project's building configuration.

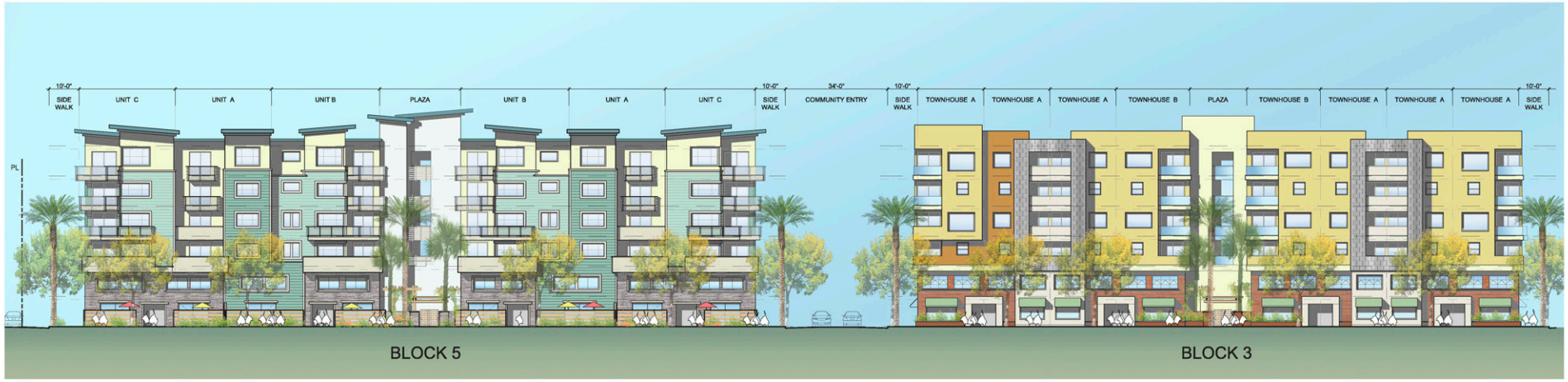
Implementation of the proposed project would change the visual character of the site from an underutilized, vacant big-box retail development, and stand alone auto-related use to a contemporary,

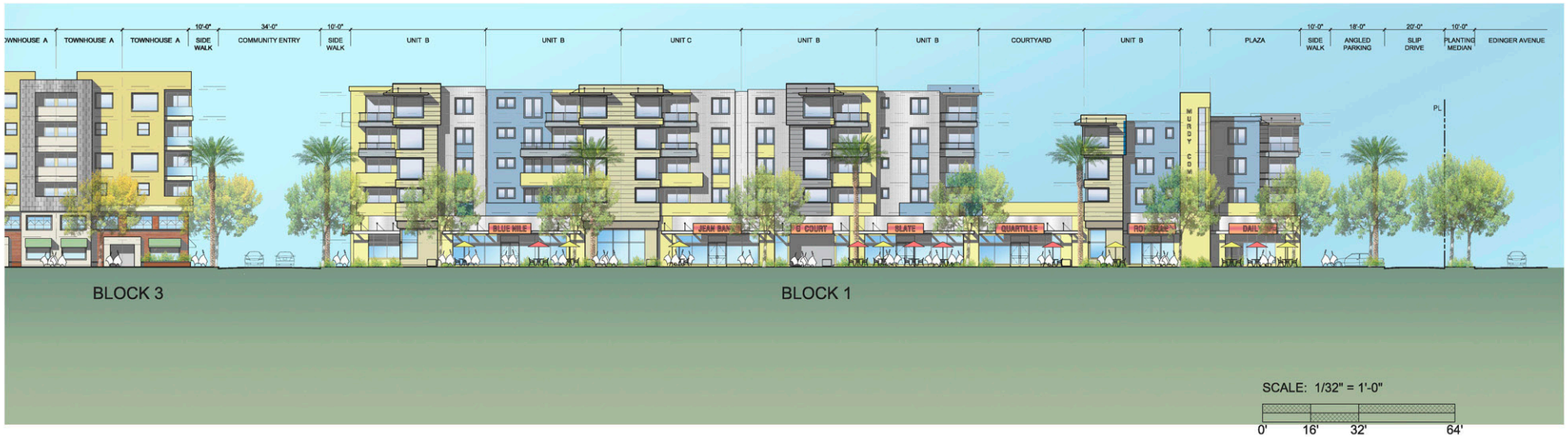
highly-designed, mixed use neighborhood consistent with the BECSP vision for the Town Center Neighborhood and Town Center Core designations and complimentary to future residential mixed uses to the north and east of the project site.

Figure 4.1-2a (Project Elevations—Gothard Street) illustrates proposed building heights. Proposed buildings would be a maximum of six stories in height, except along Edinger Avenue, illustrated in Figure 4.1-2b (Project Elevations—Edinger Avenue) where building heights would be limited to four stories for a horizontal distance of 65 feet from the back-of-sidewalk, as required by Building Scale Regulation 2.3.2(1) of the BECSP. All building frontages would be oriented toward the proposed streets or the proposed public open space area, as required by BECSP Section 2.4.1 (Building Orientation to Street and Public Open Spaces) and would be designed in compliance with BECSP Section 2.4.2 (Private Frontage Types). BECSP Section 2.4.2(3) includes specifications for private building frontages, including allowable façade and entrance treatment for various types of entrances. The proposed project would include a small plaza area at the corner of Edinger Avenue and Gothard Street consistent with the specification for the forecourt frontage type.

Proposed development has been designed to comply with the design standards included in the BECSP for the Town Center Neighborhood and Town Center Core designations. Blocks 1 and 2 located along Edinger Avenue, include both retail and residential uses and are within the Town Center Core designation. As such, these blocks are subject to development standards included in BECSP Section 2.1.3. The remainder of the project site is within the Town Center Neighborhood designation and is subject to development standards included in BECSP Section 2.1.4. Development standards relating to the visual quality and character of proposed development include regulations for building scale; frontage and building placement; streets; open space; architecture; and signage. Compliance with these development standards would ensure that implementation of the proposed project would not degrade the existing visual character and quality of the project site and surrounding area. Rather, implementation of the proposed project would achieve the BECSP objectives by transforming the character of the site to that consistent with the BECSP vision for the Town Center Boulevard segment.

Proposed development would be required to comply with Architecture Regulations included as BECSP Section 2.8 (Architecture Regulations). These regulations are intended to ensure that proposed development within the BECSP area embodies the architectural characteristics that maintain the desired human scale, rhythm, and character appropriate for the Edinger Avenue Corridor. BECSP Section 2.8.2 (Architectural Elements Regulations) would ensure that proposed development maintains the quality and character of Huntington Beach through the imposition of requirements and guidelines for facades, roofs, and sustainable practices. Furthermore, BECSP Section 2.8.3 (Architectural Character) would ensure that proposed development considers the existing character and identity of the City, and incorporates these characteristics into building design. Incorporation of these development regulations into the project design would ensure that the visual character and quality of the proposed development would be consistent with the desired Town Center Core and Town Center Neighborhood character and high visual quality.





***Source*:** Van Tilburg Banvard & Soberbergh, AIA, 2010.

FIGURE **4.1-2a**

Project Elevations-Gothard Street

***Source*:** Van Tilburg Banvard & Soberbergh, AIA, 2010.

FIGURE **4.1-2b**

Project Elevations-Edinger Avenue

Both existing and proposed streets would include public frontage improvements, as required by BECSP Section 2.5.1(1)(c) (Public Frontage Improvements). Along Edinger Avenue, Classic Boulevard specifications would be implemented. The Classic Boulevard designation includes a landscaped center median, and a protected access lane with a row of angled parking spaces separated from through lanes of traffic by curbed, landscaped separators. Landscaping along a Classic Boulevard (Edinger Avenue) would include Jacaranda trees and native, water efficient low groundcover of green foliage within the center median and landscaped planter. All new streets would be designed in accordance with the regulations provided in BECSP Section 2.5.6 (Street Types [New Street Design]). The new street design includes street trees and decorative pedestrian scale lighting ranging in height depending on the type of street. Compliance with street regulations included as BECSP Section 2.5 would ensure that streets and blocks that are developed or improved as part of the proposed project are built to enhance the connectivity of the area and create a safe and attractive streetscape environment.

Additionally, the proposed open space would be designed as a public square, defined as an open space available for community recreation and civic purposes, and is a freestanding city block, spatially defined by building frontages and streets on all sides. Landscaping, as required by BECSP Section 2.6.4(3) would consist of pathway, lawns, ornamental grasses, and trees within the commons. Both public and private open space on the project site would incorporate landscaping consistent with BECSP Section 2.6.8 (Open Space Landscaping), which includes guidelines for public spaces, paved areas, planted areas, walls and fences, lighting, and other site furnishings. Setback areas along the perimeter of the site would be landscaped in accordance with regulations included in BECSP Section 2.6.9 (Setback Area Landscaping). As such, compliance with BECSP Section 2.6 would ensure that publicly accessible open spaces are built with quality and enhance the livability of the project site and BECSP area, as a whole.

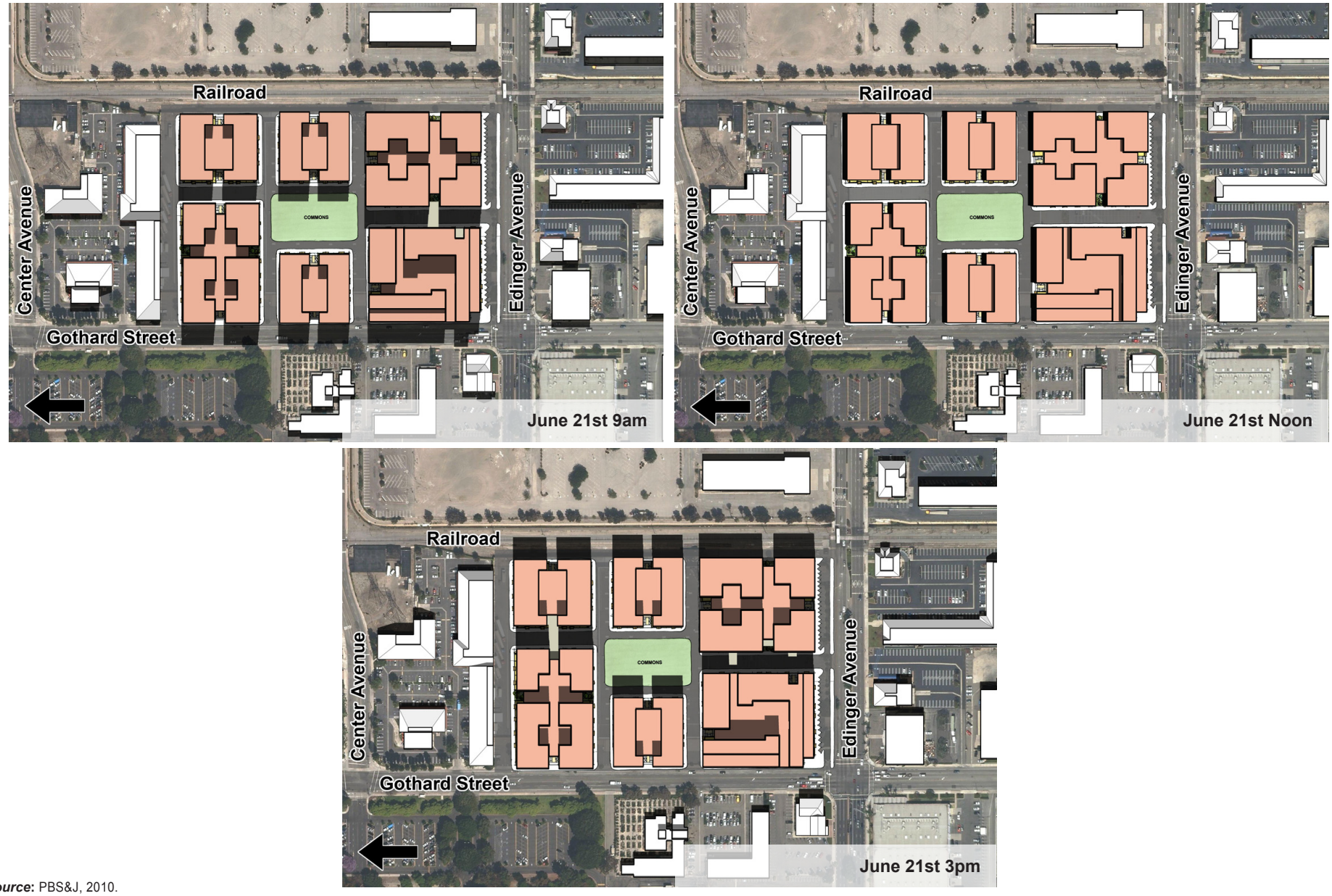
The proposed mostly six-story structures would be located adjacent to the future Amstar/Red Oak and The Revised Village at Bella Terra mixed use projects. This could present a potentially significant impact if the proposed structures would create shade/shadow impacts on identified light-sensitive uses. As defined in BECSP MM4.1-1 included in BECSP Appendix A, shadowing impacts are considered significant when shadows would be cast upon potentially light sensitive uses during a substantial portion (greater than 50 percent) of the main daylight hours (9:00 AM to 3:00 PM during the fall, winter, and spring seasons, and 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM [daylight savings time] during the summer season). Light-sensitive uses are those that depend upon light for their operation (e.g., solar panels) or for which solar access is essential for their function (e.g., swimming pools). Light-sensitive uses also include public parks and routinely useable outdoor spaces associated with residences and schools (e.g., yards and playgrounds). As required by BECSP mitigation measure MM4.1-1, a shade/shadow analysis was prepared for the proposed project to determine if the proposed project would result in significant shade/shadow impacts based on the established criteria.

Pursuant to the requirement of BECSP mitigation measure MM4.1-1, Figure 4.1-3 (Summer Solstice) and Figure 4.1-4 (Winter Solstice) illustrate shadows under the summer and winter solstices, respectively. Throughout the day of the summer solstice, as shown on Figure 4.1-3, shadows would be limited and would only fall within the project site, and would only briefly fall on a small portion of the proposed open space.

Figure 4.1-4 illustrates shadows during the winter solstice when the days are shortest and the angle of the sun in the sky has the potential to cast the longest shadows. Adjacent uses to the south and west would not be affected by project shadows during the winter solstice. However, shadows would be cast on the future mixed-use residential development to the north, along the UPRR right-of-way to the east, and on substantial portions of the proposed public open space Shadows created from the proposed project would only fall on a small portion (less than 50 percent) of the roof tops of future buildings associated with the Amstar/Red Oak mixed use residential project located nearest the project site, at 9:00 AM and again at 3:00 PM. Shadows created by the proposed project would not fall on open space areas. As such, implementation of the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts on adjacent light sensitive uses to the north of the project site.

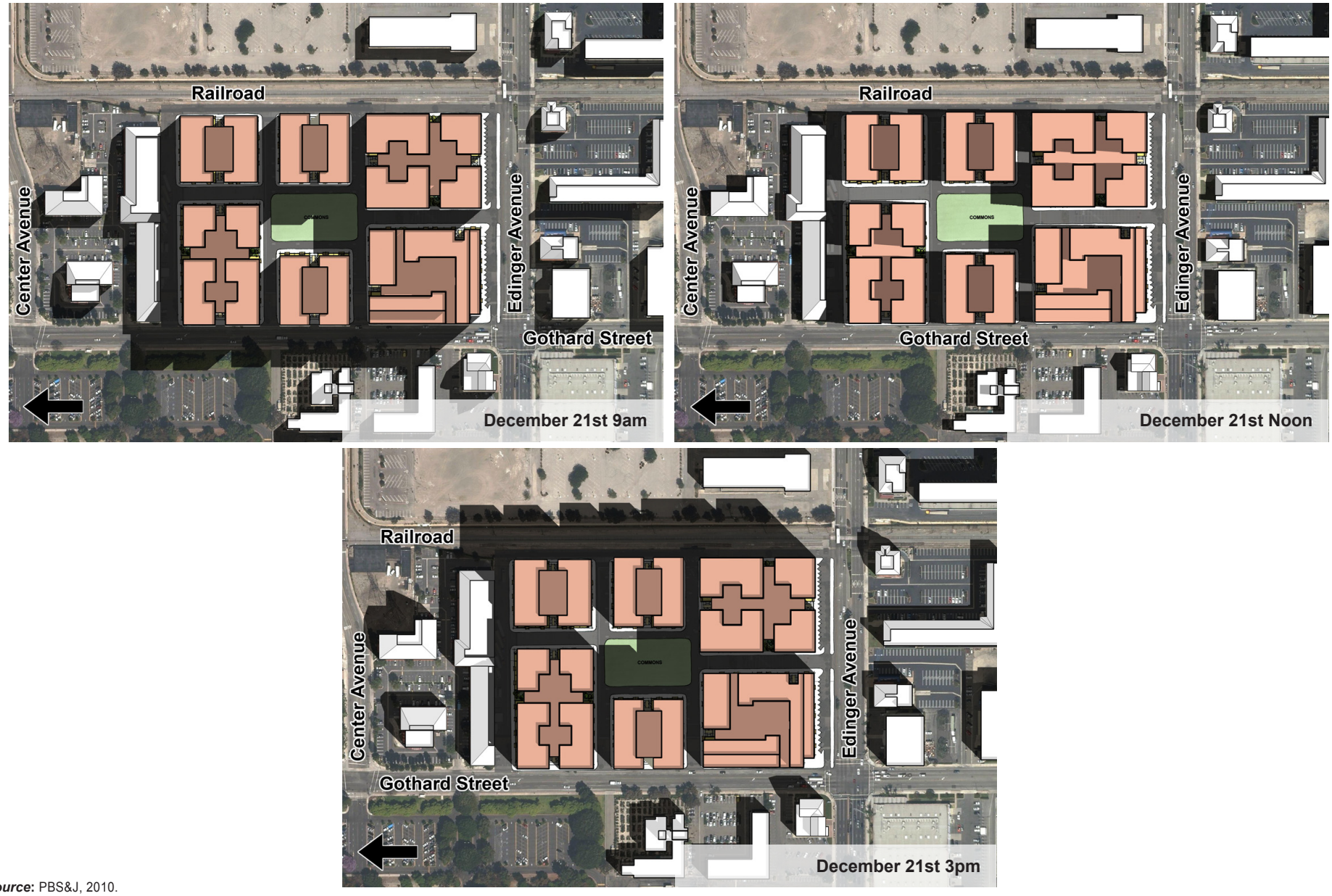
With regard to the proposed public open space, the proposed buildings would cast shadows covering an area of the public open space at 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM. However, at 12:00 PM, shadows cast on the proposed public open space would be limited to the southern quarter of the public open space. BECSP Section 2.6.8(1) states that public open spaces should provide areas of sun and shade year-round for climatic comfort. As such, shadows that would be cast during the winter solstice between the hours of 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM would not result in the decreased utility of the public open space, as areas of sun would be available through the middle portion of the day, when the public open space would be utilized most. The proposed project also includes five outdoor swimming pools that would be located in the interior courtyards of five of the six proposed blocks. Due to the proposed heights and orientation of the buildings, the proposed swimming pools would experience a considerable amount of shade throughout the day; however, outdoor swimming pools are not typically utilized extensively during the winter months, and shadows would not eliminate the utility of the pools. Therefore, because the proposed six-story structures associated with the project would not substantially affect any existing or proposed light-sensitive uses as defined by the BECSP, implementation of the proposed project would result in a less than significant impact due to shade/shadow.

In conclusion, the proposed project's design is in compliance with the BECSP Development Code, including the specific requirements and guidelines referenced above and as such, implementation of the proposed project would not degrade the existing visual character and quality of the project site and surrounding area. Implementation of the proposed project would help to achieve the BECSP objectives by transforming the character of the site to that consistent with the BECSP vision for the Town Center Core and Town Center Neighborhood. Consequently, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings and this impact would be ***less than significant***.



***Source*:** PBS&J, 2010.

FIGURE **4.1-3**
Summer Solstice



***Source*:** PBS&J, 2010.

FIGURE **4.1-4**
Winter Solstice

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Murdy Commons

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Threshold	Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Impact 4.1-3 **Implementation of the proposed project would introduce new sources of light and glare into the project vicinity. However, these sources would not adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. This impact is considered *less than significant*.**

For the purposes of this analysis, light or glare effects are evaluated by the change in illumination levels as a result of project sources and the extent to which project lighting would spill off the project site and affect adjacent light sensitive areas.

Light

Proposed development would increase overall nighttime lighting in the project area with the introduction of additional street lighting, exterior lighting (safety and way-finding), and vehicle headlights. Surrounding land uses immediately adjacent to the project site are generally commercial in nature, but in the future would include mixed use, residential uses. The closest sensitive receptors that could be affected by nighttime lighting include future mixed-use residential development to the north and east of the project site.

Night illumination can affect people in several ways. For example, where intense lighting is viewed against a dark background, the contrast attracts the attention of the viewer and could be considered annoying. Under low-light conditions, the human eye adjusts to the brightest light within the field of view. If the range of light intensity to which the eye is exposed is large, the eye will be relatively insensitive to the more dimly lighted areas within the field of view. In addition, increased illumination can affect the suitability of sleeping areas, use of outdoor areas at natural light levels, and privacy. The degree of impact is related to the degree of change from the illumination levels to which people have become accustomed.

Due to the urbanized nature of the surrounding area, a significant amount of ambient nighttime light currently exists, reducing the views of stars and affecting views of the nighttime sky. Streetlights and headlights along Edinger Avenue provide a significant amount of existing ambient light surrounding the project site. Nearby uses such as the Bella Terra Mall and other commercial uses also provide substantial amounts of exterior lighting. The proposed project would introduce nighttime lighting directly onto the project site and the immediately surrounding area. Consequently, the surrounding uses could be exposed to exterior lighting associated with the proposed buildings, streets, and open space. However, BECSP Section 2.6.8(5)(a) requires that lighting fixtures shall be directed downward from the horizontal plane of the light source to preserve a dark sky and prevent unnecessary light pollution, and requires that lighting and planting plans for public and private frontage areas be visually and aesthetically coordinated. Furthermore, BECSP Section 2.6.8(5)(d) requires specific luminaire types that would prevent light spill-over, and provide for an efficient distribution of lighting. Conformance with the BECSP would ensure that nighttime light produced by required exterior lighting would be consistent with nighttime lighting conditions of the project area. Additionally, some of this light would be masked by existing street lighting and nighttime vehicular traffic. Finally, for future residential development those future residents would consciously make the decision to live in a high-density area where there could be increased light

sources associated with the mixed-uses in the general vicinity as compared to other areas in the City. A similar situation would exist for future residents at the project site.

Although one does not currently exist, a commuter rail line could be added to the UPRR in the future. Therefore, if existing trains or potential commuter trains were to operate at night, it is possible that train lights could affect the proposed residences during nighttime hours. However, a landscaped roadway and setback is proposed along the eastern boundary of the site that runs parallel to the train tracks. The lights from trains operating at night would, therefore, not be expected to impact residential units located on the western boundary of the project site. Therefore, light impacts would be ***less than significant***.

Glare

Proposed structures would be mostly six stories in height, except along Edinger Avenue where development would be four stories in height. Buildings generally three or more stories in height have the potential to include large building faces that could introduce reflective surfaces (e.g., brightly colored building façades, reflective glass) that could increase existing levels of daytime glare. However, BECSP Section 2.8.2(2)(c) requires that buildings utilize light colored roofs to reduce glare. Additionally, BECSP MM4.1-2 requires that new structures are designed to maximize the use of non-reflective face treatment, and that this must be demonstrated on final building plans. As such, compliance with BECSP MM4.1-2 would ensure that impacts related to daytime glare would be reduced to a less than significant level by reducing the reflective properties of the building materials employed, such as glass, metal, or finished concrete. Impacts from glare would be ***less than significant***.

BECSP MM4.1-2 Proposed new structures shall be designed to maximize the use of non-reflective façade treatments, such as matte paint or glass coatings. Prior to issuance of building permits for the proposed project, the Applicant shall indicate provision of these materials on the building plans.

4.1.4 Cumulative Impacts

A cumulative impact analysis is only provided for those thresholds that result in a less than significant impact or significant and unavoidable impact, and is not provided for those thresholds that result in no project-related impacts.

The geographic context for the analysis of cumulative aesthetic impacts includes areas with views of the proposed project site. However, the proposed project in conjunction with the future adjacent Amstar/Red Oak project and The Revised Village at Bella Terra project, represent a significant portion of the existing visual character and changes that could occur in the immediate vicinity.

Development of the proposed project site and adjacent areas, with the exception of the already approved Amstar/Red Oak project and The Revised Village at Bella Terra project are subject to the BECSP Development Code, which includes standards, requirements and guidelines that guide development in BECSP area, as a whole, as well as the Edinger Avenue Corridor and overarching Town Center district. Consequently, cumulative impacts are anticipated to be ***less than significant***. Moreover, the contribution of the proposed project to such cumulative impacts would not be cumulatively considerable, because as described above, the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on the visual character or quality of the project area. Therefore, the proposed project's

contribution would not be cumulatively considerable, and the cumulative impact of the proposed project would be ***less than significant***.

Huntington Beach is an urbanized City and contains numerous existing sources of nighttime lighting. Cumulative development would constitute intensification of an already urban and nearly built-out area and would generally occur through redevelopment or infill development. Although cumulative new development or redevelopment could include direct illumination of project structures, features, and/or walkways, the increase in ambient nighttime lighting levels in these areas would only rise minimally because a significant amount of ambient lighting currently exists due to the urbanized nature of the City as a whole. Thus, increases in nighttime lighting that would occur with cumulative development would not significantly affect nighttime views of the sky because such views are already limited. Cumulative development, in combination with the proposed project, is not anticipated to result in the creation of new sources of light that could negatively affect nighttime views. Therefore, cumulative impacts associated with ambient nighttime lighting would be considered ***less than significant***.

The cumulative context for spillover light would be other development that could add to the spillover light effects of the project on properties in the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Spillover light is a site-specific effect that could only be added to by other projects in the immediate vicinity of the affected property. Implementation of the proposed project in combination with adjacent projects would add lighting typical of mixed-use residential and commercial developments. This includes directed lighting for architectural accents, signage, landscape elements, security and lighting from vehicles. Because there are no existing immediately adjacent residential uses or other light-sensitive uses, implementation of the proposed project in combination with future residential mixed use projects represent the cumulative potential for spillover lighting in the area because both projects would contain residential uses. Future residents from both projects would make a conscious decision to live in an area that could include increased lighting due to the mix of uses proposed. Additionally, the BECSP includes lighting requirements that would reduce the potential for spill lighting to occur from future development in the plan area, not including future development to the immediate north and east of the proposed project site. Therefore, a ***less than significant*** cumulative impacts would result from spillover lighting.

Cumulative development could result in some increase in glare, as specific building materials and configurations are uncertain. However, these potential increases are likely to be minor and consistent with the existing built environment due to limited development potential and existing City regulations. Further, future projects would be subject to mitigation measure BECSP MM4.1-2, which would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level. Consequently, cumulative glare within the surrounding area would be less than significant. As the proposed project and future development within the BECSP area would be required to comply with BECSP MM4.1-2, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a significant daytime glare impact, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to this impact. Therefore, cumulative impacts associated with glare would not be cumulatively considerable and would be ***less than significant***.

4.1.5 References

Huntington Beach, City of. *Beach and Edinger Corridors Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report*, November 2009.

———. *Beach and Edinger Corridors Specific Plan*, Adopted March 2010.

———. *City of Huntington Beach General Plan*, May 13, 1996.